

Summary of State of the County Address - Milwaukee County Executive Scott Walker Blueprint for Economic Prosperity

Long-term decisions that helped Milwaukee County adapt to the national financial meltdown:

- We reduced our debt by 10% and our workforce by 24%.
- We worked with the private sector to create funding partnerships.
- The county's bond rating improved in recognition of our efforts to address our fiscal issues.
- We finished 2007 with a \$7.9 million surplus and are looking to break even for 2008.

Our ***Blueprint for Economic Prosperity*** is a comprehensive plan that calls for immediate action to improve our local economy and to put people back to work.

Make it easier for people to afford a home or business in Milwaukee County.

- Suspend the county sales tax as of March 1st. This will save taxpayers \$56.2 million
- Rebate the county property tax levy bill for 2009. This will save taxpayers \$258 million.
- Create a JOBS Fund worth \$150 million that can help retain jobs and attract new jobs.
- Create an Innovations Fund worth \$100 million that will focus on businesses that create jobs.
- Double the Work Opportunity Tax Credit to create 10,000 jobs right here in Milwaukee County.

Take the nearly \$4 billion that the State of Wisconsin will be eligible for under the stimulus package and apply it to the quickest method to improve the economy: tax cuts. Suspend the collection of the state sales and use tax as of March 1 for the remainder of this year, saving Wisconsin taxpayers \$3.26 billion in 2009.

Increase the odds of finding and keeping a job.

- Move the mental health complex to the site of the former St. Michael Hospital and sell the existing site for development at the regional medical complex.
- Build a new School of Engineering for the University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee on the County Grounds.
- Sell the Park East Corridor land to the city for market value and repeal the so-called community benefits from years ago.

Connect people to jobs - Pursue a long-term lease option to a private entity for General Mitchell International Airport. We need the County Board to approve funding for an application to the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) for a pilot program authorizing the long-term lease. The proceeds would pay off outstanding debt for airport projects, serve as a long-term funding stream for our bus transit system, and establish the Innovations Fund.

Apply for a Very Small Starts grant to create the first Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) line. The County Board approved funding for this request in the 2009 budget.

A new partnership on transit with the City of Waukesha and Waukesha County will eliminate additional transfer fees, advance van pools, and implement a compatible fare box system.

Increase jobs for those in need - State approval of the expansion of Family Care without continued delay. We submitted our application to the State last year to ensure that people with developmental and physical disabilities are served. The State has not committed to a start date while we have over 2,700 people on waiting lists for service.

Finally, we need to streamline and reform government to be able to build an environment for job growth in Milwaukee County. Reform collective bargaining laws to reflect current economic conditions and local government's ability to pay. Local governments need relief from the state so we can control employee wage and benefit costs. We need to take aggressive steps now to put money into the hands of our citizens and the businesses that create jobs – this will stimulate economic activity and save jobs. Raising taxes of any kind will result in more job loss, more business closures and more reliance on government services.